

## **APPENDIX C**

### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING PUBLIC AWARENESS AND MEDIA CAMPAIGN**

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Task Force recommends that the City of Asheville create a public awareness/education campaign designed to overcome the myths and stereotypes connected to affordable housing; to communicate the City's commitment to affordable housing; to communicate the benefits of affordable housing; and to gain support by a wide group of local interests for expanded affordable housing opportunities in Asheville and Buncombe County.

There currently does not exist a clear understanding of what affordable housing is and who benefits from it. To combat this lack of clear understanding, the Task Force recommends several steps:

1. Assign the work: contract with an outside agency or commission city staff to coordinate the campaign.
2. Alliance of stakeholders: capitalize on existing groups and efforts. Partners and collaborators should be involved in the decision making and direction of the campaign and in providing communication networks.
3. Data: Gather meaningful, understandable data. More than enough information exists to support the need for affordable housing.  
Create a Common Language: Use the data to craft a message that appeals to a large spectrum of the population. It should include hard numbers and human interest elements. Convey the economic worthiness of affordable housing and its role in the economic success and strengthening of the community. Model what demographic, economic or social trends could occur if the issue is not properly addressed. Give examples from other parts of the country.
4. Designate messengers: As affordable housing impacts all segments of society, messengers must come from all segments of society and include employers, elected officials, teachers, nurses, firefighters, clergy, etc.
5. Utilize a variety of mediums: One large kick-off event, billboards, news media, print media, websites, community meetings, places of worship, etc.

6. Give people a place to go: website with links to housing resources, providers and information.

### **Audience**

- General public, including Spanish speakers, non-web users and individuals with low reading levels.
- Media
- Decision makers and elected officials at all levels, not just the local level but also the state and federal levels.
- Faith based groups and places of worship.
- Employers

### **Campaign Objectives:**

1. Support individuals in Congress, the General Assembly, City Council and County Commissions as they promote necessary changes to address affordable housing. Some of these changes may be difficult as they will include such things as changes to zoning ordinances that increase density in neighborhoods, potential changes in tax rates, changes in the way that proposed developments are considered and reviewed by staff and council, and potential bond referendums.

2. Identify and support affordable housing funding sources, including local, state and national trust funds, earned income tax credits, low income housing tax credits, Section 8 housing vouchers and other potential legislation.

3. Work with local officials to promote fair and balanced zoning ordinances and remove review processes that cause unnecessary or unwarranted delays as these delays increase the cost of affordable housing.

4. Increase the supply of both affordable rental housing and homes for home ownership by supporting and incentivising local developers.

5. Increase and support the expansion of rental and home ownership counseling, education and financial literacy, especially in the workplace environment.

6. Increase the number and diversity of community members who feel engaged in the promotion of affordable housing in the community.

7. Help the entire community in every neighborhood to understand that affordable housing is a need by each person and that affordable and workforce housing are not dirty words.

**Measuring Success:** There should be measurements to evaluate the campaign's performance, including:

1. Pre- and post testing or surveys to measure attitude changes,
2. The number of new affordable housing units produced or amount of increased amount of funding available for affordable housing,
3. Number of new applicants enrolled in homeownership, rental counseling classes, or financial literacy courses,
4. Tracking of media coverage, conversations with elected officials, audience response and community meetings,
5. Enactment or defeat of specific laws or ordinances.

**Budgeting:** The budget for this endeavor should be considered. While the actual campaign could take many forms, cost must be considered for the cost of broadcast media and related materials. Efforts should be made to have many of these costs donated but some funding will probably be necessary. Partners and collaborators can provide some funding, in kind goods and services and volunteers to further campaign objectives. It will be necessary to designate staffing to insure proper monitoring, upkeep and coordination of the various activities of a successful campaign.